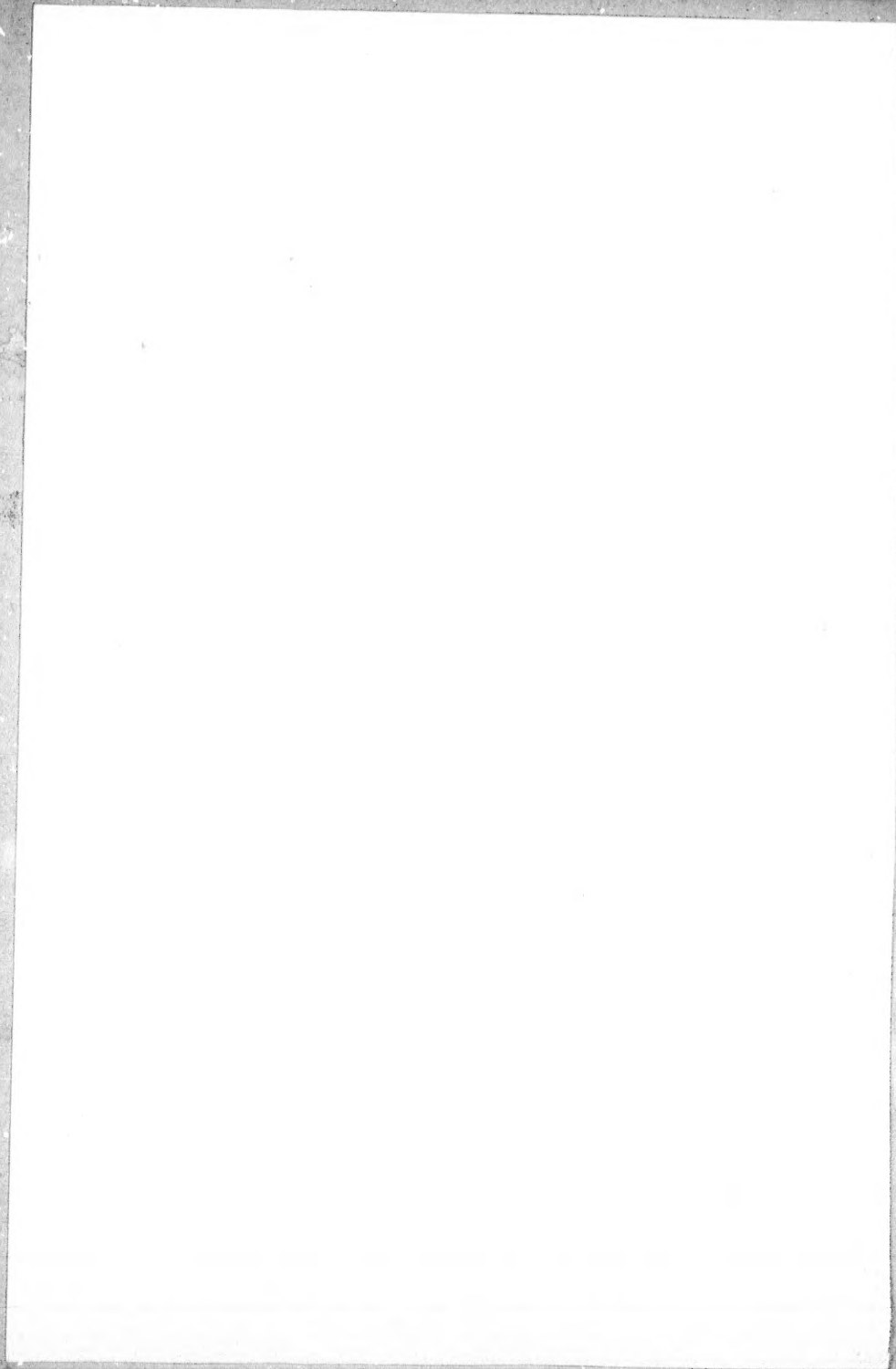




A REPLY

TO A

PAMPHLET OF VESTRYMEN

OF

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

II

MONTREAL

BY THE

HON. JOHN HAMILTON

MONTREAL:

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PARISH OF ST. MARY

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

MONTREAL

FOR JOHN HAMILTON

A SECOND LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

THE REV. RURAL DEAN LONSDALL

BY

THE HON. JOHN HAMILTON.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I can readily believe that your astonishment, as well as that of many others, was little short of my own, on finding that the result of my challenge to the Chancellor and his Reverend friend, was the production of “extracts” from the late Metropolitan’s letters, printed by twelve Vestrymen of the Cathedral, under the sanction of the Rev. Dr. Balch, which justify, to a certain extent, the remarks made by the Chancellor, at the never-to-be-forgotten Vestry Meeting of the 6th December last. It does seem to me not a little curious that the Chancellor, who was, as is very well known, the most trusted and confidential friend among the laity of the Diocese, whom the late Metropolitan had, should have preferred to adopt the course he has pursued, rather than fulfil a promise voluntarily made. Had he fulfilled that promise, he would have prevented a train of circumstances which cannot have been otherwise than unpleasant to many of the friends of the late Metropolitan, and which I regret myself on this account.

The responsibility at the same time rests very much more with others than with myself, for I can assure you most distinctly, that when I wrote my first letter to Mr. Chancellor Bethune, dated 15th January, I entertained no unpleasant feeling con-

nected with this matter, nor did I contemplate printing one syllable in connection with it. Had this idea entered my head, the allusion to a lady made therein, with reference to finding the letters, would most certainly not have been made. I referred to the curious fact told me by Mr. Bethune as to the discovery of these letters, after they had been mislaid for a very considerable period. I am informed that they came to light shortly before the aforesaid meeting of the 6th December.

This reference I felt confident the Chancellor would have understood, but instead of this, to my surprise, the tone of his letters of the 17th instant revealed that there was a screw loose somewhere, and when his second came, covering his friend's *mild and pleasant effusion* of the same date, I at once saw where the shoe pinched, and that a greater than he had interfered to prevent the fulfilment of the Chancellor's promise.

With that astuteness for which the Rev. Doctor has shown himself to be so remarkable, he came to the conclusion that, by, as it were, driving me to pursue the course I did in reality adopt, an opportunity would be more readily afforded him of publishing the letters, and thus enlisting and exciting the sympathies of his friends, and, perchance, of converting not a few of his enemies. He saw that at the same time he would be able to throw upon me the odium of having compelled him to adopt a course most distasteful to himself, while, in fact, he was delighted at being afforded such an opportunity, and I admit that, to a certain extent, he has been successful, for though he has not turned many, or, indeed, any opponents, he has certainly excited the sympathies of his friends. Whether the price paid has not been rather incommensurate with the benefit received, I leave to others to judge. Regretting, as I do extremely, any pain I may have directly or indirectly caused any of the relatives or friends of the late Metropolitan, I yet feel satisfied that it is for the real benefit of all concerned, that matters should have turned out as they have. It is a plain fact that the contents of Bishop Fulford's private letters

were widely circulated among Dr. Balch's friends. It is better, therefore, that we should know the real facts, than that the endless amount of stories which have been circulated from house to house during the last few months, as well as the intrigues founded thereon, should be prolonged.

That I and others were fully justified in believing that the late Metropolitan had never taken any active part in bringing Dr. Balch to Montreal, is, I think, fully proven by the statement of the Bishop of Ontario given in my last, and by the following letter from the Bishop of Quebec to the Bishop of Ontario, dated February 15th last:—

MY DEAR BISHOP,—I do not recollect the conversation on shipboard to which Mr. Hamilton alludes; but it is quite possible that I may have been present at such a conversation without being struck by the Bishop's statement. It would not have been new to me. Whatever he meant by it, the Bishop used the very words quoted by Mr. Hamilton in conversation with me. He seemed to be sore because some of Dr. Balch's friends were pressing him to do something more for Dr. Balch, in the way of advancement, or dignity; and that Dr. Balch himself spoke as though he (the Bishop) had induced him to make great sacrifices to come to Canada; and he said, with a great deal of emphasis, "I had nothing whatever to do with it, except that I did not oppose."

I certainly gathered from this that the Bishop had been less prominent than his letters show him to have been, in the bringing of Dr. Balch to Canada. And now that I have seen his letters, I hardly know what he did mean.

Faithfully yours,

The Lord Bishop of Ontario.

J. W. QUEBEC.

I have only to add that, were it necessary, I could give the names of many gentlemen—*clerical as well as lay*,—who have come forward and assured me that they had personally heard statements made by the late Metropolitan from his own lips, similar to that which I gave you in my first letter. I do not, however, consider it either necessary or desirable to do this, for those who will not believe the evidence already produced, would not, in the words of the "Gude Book," be convinced "even should one rise from the dead."

Although the Lord Bishop of Quebec very truly remarks, that it is very hard to know now what the late Metropolitan

really meant, yet it seems to me that he may very possibly have considered the "whole scheme" perfected by the action of the Rector, Churchwardens, and those of the vestry who took part in getting up the subscription for the Rev. Dr. Balch's maintenance at the Cathedral, before he ever wrote a line, at all events officially, on the subject. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that we have only "extracts," not the letters themselves; and "extracts" from private letters without the letters which called them forth, or the full circumstances of the occasions on which they were written, afford at best a very partial view. I do not mean to imply that the Vestrymen may not have exercised a proper discretion in the selections they have made.

Whether my view of His Lordship's meaning be correct or not, it is an indubitable fact that he has not been the first man who has brought a stranger in, and then discovered that the new-comer did not meet his expectations, thereby causing a great change of mind, and involving a forgetfulness of many of the particulars of the case, especially after a considerable lapse of time. I have said that these letters to a certain extent justified the Chancellor's statements, but there is one most important particular in which I think they fail to do so. There is nothing in them whatever to show that Dr. Balch ever had any real chance of the Bishopric of Nebraska.

Chancellor Bethune's statement was tantamount to this: that inasmuch as the late Metropolitan had induced Dr. Balch to decline the Bishopric of Nebraska, therefore it would be an injustice to dismiss him from the Cathedral.

A careful perusal of the extracts published from the Bishop's letters, elicits the truth that there is no foundation for this statement. Whether there was a *possibility* of Dr. Balch's obtaining the Bishopric of Nebraska, had he desired it, I do not know. It is by no means clear that he could, for it is one thing for a friend to propose a man for an office, and another thing for that man to be elected to that office. However, be that as it may, it is quite clear that the late Bishop

of Montreal's advice to Dr. Balch had nothing whatever to do with Dr. Balch's not getting the Bishopric, and that for this reason, that another person was nominated to the post by the American House of Bishops before Dr. Balch received Bishop Fulford's letter on the subject. Dr. Balch wrote (*vide* vestrymen's pamphlet, p. 4) to the Bishop of Montreal on the 18th October, 1865, asking his advice about Nebraska. The Bishop of Montreal received that letter on the evening of the 20th, and replied to it at once. This reply Dr. Balch could not possibly have received before the 22nd October. But on the morning of the 21st October, the House of Bishops sent down to the Lower House the name of the Rev. Dr. C. Clarkson as Bishop of Nebraska, who was duly elected next day (or sitting), 23rd October, the 22nd being Sunday. (This fact will be found in the Journal of the General Convention for 1865, page 116.) It is also evident, from the Bishop of Montreal's first letter to Dr. Balch, in which the latter asked the Bishop's advice, that Dr. Balch must have stated that he had been invited to go out and look at the Territory. That could not have taken place, inasmuch as the Bishop of Nebraska was on the point of being elected by the General Convention, which would leave no time for Dr. Balch to go out and look at Nebraska.

With reference to the statement in Bishop Talbot's letter (as given in the Vestrymen's pamphlet, page 9) it seems evident that there must have been, on the part of Bishop Talbot, some confusion of memory resulting in a grave misstatement of fact. Bishop Talbot, writing to Dr. Balch under date of December 1st, 1868, or three years after the events referred to, says that during the General Convention of 1865 he desired to see Dr. Balch elected Bishop of Nebraska, and that he spoke to the Bishop of Montreal on the subject but his reply (Bishop Fulford's) was, that "Dr. Balch was too useful a man in Canada to be spared," &c. Now, Dr. Balch did not come to settle in Canada until April or May, 1866. Moreover, it seems

quite clear that even so late as the end of December, 1865, (*vide* Bishop's second letter, p. 5,) there was no definite idea in the mind of the Bishop of Montreal that Dr. Balch would really come to Canada. It is quite impossible that the conversation referred to by Bishop Talbot could have taken place then; in fact, if I am not misinformed, the Bishop of Montreal had left Philadelphia and returned to Canada long before the subject of Missionary Bishops came up for discussion in the General Convention.

The only conclusion I can arrive at in connection with all these Nebraska complications is that Dr. Balch being (as was so well put by the Bishop of Montreal in his letter of 20th October, 1865) "*unsettled, and with the world before him,*" used them while fishing for that offer of employment in Canada, which his letters seemed actually to have elicited.

Though this letter has already assumed greater proportions than I anticipated, I cannot close it without paying my respects to those magnanimous persons, the twelve vestrymen, whose liberality and good taste appear to have been entirely exhausted by their one great effort of publishing what they are pleased to style my "production" along with their own, for they never favored me with a copy of theirs, but left me indebted to the kind consideration of a friend for its perusal. When, however, I come to consider that these valiant defenders of the "illustrious dead," and malevolent assailers of the "distinguished living," are the same men who were principals and accessories to the discreditable attempt to suppress the marginal notes made by the present Metropolitan on their Report to the Vestry on the 6th Dec. last, and that they actually suppressed one of His Lordship's letters to suit their own purposes, I, for one, cannot pretend to be astonished at any step they might pursue to gain their ends. Feeling satisfied that their personal attacks on myself would be about as effective, to use a familiar expression, as "water on a duck's back," they concluded that they could

wound me most by attacking my most intimate friend. While they did this, they, at the same time, gratified their malevolence by an attack on one whom they dislike. These are the causes of that attack on the Bishop of Ontario, whom they accuse of "thrusting himself into this unhappy controversy." As it happens, His Lordship first told me of the late Bishop's statement at the time of the Diocesan Synod in November, 1868, on the occasion of the then Metropolitan difficulties. This circumstance, however, escaped my memory at the time that I wrote you last, but it has since been recalled to mind.

Another slanderous assertion they make is, "that His Lordship does not love peace." If His Lordship were not a lover of peace, they would not have dared to give him such an admirable opportunity of proving it by throwing light on the cause of the Metropolitan difficulties, and revealing the tactics of their candidate. His Lordship has already answered their attack in another place so clearly and decidedly that, had they any proper feelings left, they would withdraw their libellous charges as publicly as they made them. I fancy, however, that His Lordship may as well possess his soul in patience, for he will have long to wait ere they recognise that duty.

There is a further point on which it is proper to remark, namely, the breach of confidence involved in the reference to these private letters. If public reference to private correspondence between gentlemen can be justified under any circumstances, there will soon cease to be any private correspondence, as no letters can be safe, and especially will it be impossible for public men to write private letters. But I think the offence is heightened when we have to deal with the memory of the dead. Who made the first reference to these private letters of Bishop Fulford? The worthy supporters of Dr. Balch, both verbally and through their special organ at Montreal, have had a great deal to say on this point. But they seem to fail to see that their remarks

can alone apply to the Rev. Doctor himself, for how did this correspondence in all its details first become known? The late Metropolitan certainly did not reveal it. His letters, it is true, if the extracts are authentic, exhibit a lack of prudence and judgment. But he did not know with whom he had to deal. Dr. Balch was the custodian of the Bishop's private communications, and it was his duty to see that they were carefully guarded. But their contents were trumpeted out everywhere. When Chancellor Bethune committed the impropriety of making a public reference to them at the Vestry Meeting, he said that he had seen them, and presumed that many others had done so.

And now, in conclusion, I think I am fairly entitled to claim that, notwithstanding all the rejoicings of the Rev. Doctor and his friends over my discomfiture, to say nothing at all of the visit paid the Doctor on *one occasion* by the "Angel of Truth," I have demonstrated pretty conclusively from the "extracts" selected by the Vestrymen from the late Bishop's letters that he in reality was the victim of misplaced confidence; that the Rev. Doctor's tales about Nebraska were simply, to use a familiar expression, "a sprat set to catch a mackerel," and that they succeeded in so doing. These extracts, as I have admitted, justify to a certain extent the Chancellor's statement at the Vestry Meeting, and make it very difficult indeed to understand what the late Metropolitan really meant by the statements which he unquestionably made on this subject to so many.

With this I take leave of the subject, at all events for the present, and beg to subscribe myself,

Yours truly,

JOHN HAMILTON.

MONTREAL, 27th Feb., 1870.

